

September 9, 2009

Representative Pam Byrnes

S0986 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Representative Sarah Roberts

S0788 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Re: HB 5156 and HB 5157 requiring contraceptive equity

Dear Representatives Byrnes, Roberts and Members of House Judiciary Committee:

Before my daughter reached puberty, I told her that when she felt she was ready to have sex, she should come to me and we would make sure she had the knowledge, maturity and protection in place before taking this crucial step. And she did.

When she came to me at 14 and said that she was ready to have sex with her 18 year old boyfriend, I told her it was best to wait and explained why. And she did.

When she came back to me at 17, she had proved to me that she was ready. I promised her that I would help her obtain safe and effective contraception. And I did.

We didn't lie to our doctor – saying she needed birth control pills merely to “regulate her periods” -- like so many of her sexually active friends and their mothers did.

We told the truth. We did it right. We faced the reality that a young woman was approaching her sexual life with a sensible plan.

Imagine my surprise when I found out that my insurance company, Priority Health, wouldn't cover her birth control pills. We were forced to pay nearly \$40.00 per month to keep my unemployed, high school senior from becoming a too-young mother.

Several months later, I switched to a new plan through my employer (still with Priority Health) and lo and behold, my daughter's birth control pills were covered! Now she pays less than \$10.00 per month.

Why the discrepancy? Priority Health couldn't say.

If contraception is truly a morality issue at Priority Health (which I object to), they should say so, and their plans should be consistent.

If a woman is forced into the "regulating periods" lie because contraception is not a "medical issue" (which I object to), they should say so, and their plans should be consistent.

And if contraceptive coverage varies from plan to plan within one insurance company, that means people who can't afford a premium policy -- like poor women and young women -- can't get contraceptive coverage. These are the very women who may need it most! Such a policy is counterintuitive at best and discriminatory at worst.

Contraceptive care is too important to leave to the whim of an insurance company. Insurers don't have to deal with the disastrous consequences of an unwanted pregnancy. But, on a purely practical level, shouldn't their goal be to prevent the costs of such a pregnancy?

The women of Michigan need to know that when they act responsibly about their sexual life and try to plan their pregnancies, their contraception will be covered: they will be covered when they hand a pharmacist a prescription for contraception; they will be covered when they submit that bill to their insurance company.

My daughter and I thank the sponsors of HB 5156 and 5157, and hope the House Judiciary Committee will refer the bills out of Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca McCroskey". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Rebecca" and last name "McCroskey" clearly distinguishable.

Rebecca McCroskey
750 Franklin Street
North Muskegon, Michigan 49445

(President, Muskegon National Organization for Women)